

**Representative Edward Markey**  
**Floor Statement**  
**Department of Labor, Health, Human Services, Education,**  
**and Related Agencies Appropriation Act for Fiscal Year 2004**  
**July 9, 2003**

Mr. Speaker: the dramatic halt in funding increases for NIH mean a dramatic curtailment of plans to combat debilitating disease in our nation. We are about to face a demographic boom in the number of seniors in our population. Yet the Bush budget tells NIH that we're broke – a message that is ludicrous in light of the happy-times tax giveaway just voted by this Congress.

Reducing our nation's commitment to this research means turning our backs on our seniors now and the future generations that will suffer from this disease. It also means we are turning our backs on a health care system that will crumble unless we divert the coming epidemic.

Alzheimer's research will suffer significant setbacks if this current budget proposal becomes law.

A solid research infrastructure is now in place and the paths for further investigation are clear. The missing ingredient is the money needed to realize the scientific opportunities. A failure to invest adequately, as now proposed, will jeopardize over 20 years of valuable scientific work on Alzheimer's disease.

Alzheimer's disease affects four million people in the United States. Without a research breakthrough or the development of new treatments in the next few years, it will be too late to save many of the 14 million baby boomers from this devastating disease.

Research is our best answer to delay the onset of Alzheimer's and if we do this soon then we can protect half of the baby boomers who are now at risk from ever suffering the devastating effects of

the disease.

Our investment to the NIH produces invaluable life saving treatments and cures and we must not trade this for a series of tax-cuts that are already destroying our economy.

It would be nice if we could fight disease without NIH – just give everyone the equivalent of their per capita research budget in the form of a tax cut and let the TAXPAYER decide how to spend it. Wouldn't that be nice? Well, it is a fantasy -- the reality of killer diseases requires a hard-headed commitment to a vigorous research budget devoted to those challenges which are with us every day or just around the corner.

It takes an enormous amount of financial resources to develop new treatments and cures. It is now estimated that each new drug developed will cost roughly \$897 million dollars. If we adequately increased the NIH funding to \$30 billion for 2004 then we would have the potential to develop of 3 new life saving drugs.

The development of new treatments will result in tremendous saving which are impossible to fully calculate. Each year 1.2 million lives are saved by cancer treatments. We have significantly reduced life-threatened infectious diseases through vaccination and drug treatment. It is estimated that if delay the onset of Alzheimer's by 5 years then our nation will save at least \$50 billion in annual health and long-term care costs! There are drugs being tested right now that will do just that.

We will never spend these life-saving dollars with a tax-cut and we certainly won't prevent diseases with it.  
Let's wake up and vote down this fiscal flight of fancy.

Thank you.